



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023
Virtual Meeting: Zoom

Executive Committee Members Present: Greg Abbe, Jo Ann Bodemer, Amy Boyd, Emmett Lyne, Maggie McCarey

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dennis Villanueva

Other Attendees: Eric Belliveau, Adrian Caesar, Rachel Evans, Paul Johnson, Elliott Jacobson, Brian Beote, Alyssa Vargas, Ina Dasso, David Lyons, Steve Menges, Audrey Eidelman Kiernan, Aladdine Joroff, Sam Nigro, Maggie Downey, Bill Graham, Bill O'Connor, Mark Tajima, Henri Rauschenbach

1. Call to Order

McCarey, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

2. Executive Committee Updates and Business

Lyne announced that on April 28, 2022, a federal indictment was opened against Joseph and Chris Ponzio, Mass Save weatherization and electrical service providers. The Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested the Ponzio brothers as they allegedly allocated improper benefits to their companies and bribed a lead vendor employee. On January 26th, 2023, a superseding indictment was filed that includes additional charges of tax fraud and alleges that another lead vendor employee was involved. Lyne said that this is an ongoing criminal matter so there is no determination of guilt. The program administrators (PAs) are reviewing each allegation set forth, but to date, no PA employees have been accused of involvement in the indictment. Lyne stated that the PAs work diligently to operate programs effectively and are disappointed by the allegations.

3. EEAC Management

Follow-Ups from January EEAC Meeting

McCarey listed four topics for follow-up from the January EEAC Meeting:

1. Standardization of the EEAC data request process
2. Program Administrator coordination to reduce customer wait times
3. Blount Seafoods electrification project follow-ups
4. Heat Pump Perception Survey results data

McCarey said that the PAs and Department of Energy Resources (DOER) are standardizing the EEAC data request process and asked if updates regarding weatherization and home energy assessment (HEA) contractors should be provided during the February EEAC Meeting. McCarey said that Councilors have requested weatherization and HEA data broken out by contractor type, as well as weatherization and HEA wait times by location and PA. Peters replied that the data requests make sense, but the home performance contractors (HPCs) and independent insulation contractors (IICs) should not be portrayed as opponents as they are both critical to Mass Save programs. Peters said that the PAs have to determine how to accurately present the requested HEA wait times. McCarey said that communicating HEA and weatherization wait times facilitates public understanding of overall program status. McCarey added that trends in wait times reflect progress on energy specialist hiring.

Bodemer asked if audits and weatherization data for the Income-Eligible Program could be presented in February. Peters said that the Low-income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN) could provide a verbal update but not a presentation before the February EEAC Meeting. Beote asked if LEAN should share year-to-date weatherization jobs or HEAs. Bodemer said that LEAN should provide updates on wait times and weatherization project pipelines for income-eligible customers.

Johnson commented that LEAN should present actual data instead of providing a verbal update. Johnson said that IICs have smaller project pipelines due to low HEA volume. At the Best Practices Working Group, comprised of Mass Save contractors, Johnson said that IICs reported difficulty in securing customers even with direct weatherization offerings; direct weatherization provides weatherization services with HEAs performed retroactively. Johnson said contractors are feeling the consequences of the previous pricing request for quotes (RFQ) and asked when the next pricing RFQ would be released. Johnson asked for detailed information on how lead vendors are hiring additional energy specialists, including how many interviews are conducted weekly, and what outreach is performed. Johnson expressed concerns that contractor outreach and customer wait times will reflect poorly on PA ability to manage Mass Save and that a solution needs to be implemented for the sake of the programs. McCarey suggested that the PAs provide a detailed update on energy specialist hiring efforts in March.

McCarey noted that she had asked at the January EEAC Meeting whether contract amendments would be required to allow for customer-transfers across lead vendors. Peters responded that the PAs are discussing cross-PA coordination to reduce customer wait times.

McCarey said that Bob Rio had asked for follow-up documentation or lessons-learned from the cancelled Blount Seafoods electrification project. Lyne replied that he would check for follow-up information with Stephanie Terach.

McCarey also said that Abbe had requested results data from the heat-pump perception survey.

Lyne responded that the PAs want to manage and track data requests, but need to be careful about management since the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) has not yet approved the formal data request process.

Councilor Term Updates

Dasso announced that seven candidates are participating in the election for the Energy Efficiency Small Businesses Representative. Dasso said that the online election poll would open on February 2nd and close on February 14th, but a runoff between the top two candidates could happen if a representative was not elected by a majority vote. McCarey said that DOER would post each candidate's statement of interest on the EEAC website to inform voting.

4. EEAC Planning

2023 EEAC Budget

Evans stated that the DPU requires the 2023 EEAC Budget to be submitted by March 1st. However, the bid selection process for a new EEAC consultant contract was not yet complete, so DOER had extended the existing EEAC Consultant Team (C-Team) contract by three months. Due to the level of detail required in the EEAC budget proposal, the DPU had advised the Council to request a one-month extension to allow for the development of a new consultant contract. Evans said that the Executive Committee would review responses to the Consultant Services request for responses and execute a new contract in order to meet the extended deadline. Evans said that DOER will submit a request to extend the filing deadline for the proposed 2023 EEAC Budget until April 1st.

2023 Priorities

McCarey shared a draft of 2023 EEAC Priorities, which includes many 2022 Priorities in addition to topics related to winter-price mitigation strategies, federal-funding opportunities, and monitoring progress of program implementation.

McCarey said that DOER had conducted a survey to solicit Council feedback on additional priority areas, rank each priority in order of importance, and identify topics for deep-dive meetings. McCarey requested that the Executive Committee propose three priority areas for discussion in deep-dive meetings, which would then be discussed by the Council.

Lyne said that the PAs can provide a lunch-and-learn session in March on Mass Save data.

Boyd asked if multiple topics can be consolidated into individual deep-dive meetings. Boyd suggested that the deep dives include detailed discussion on each topic. McCarey said that related topics can be combined into the same meeting, but agreed that detailed discussion is important.

Bodemer asked if implementation contractors could present on moderate-income program delivery to understand their perspective. McCarey said that the best way to conduct deep dives should be determined after topics are selected.

Lyne stated that the PAs want to articulate their own priorities before the February EEAC Meeting, but appreciated Council support on improving program strategy. McCarey said that the PAs should provide comments on the proposed deep-dive topics or recommend other topics.

Peters said that moderate-income program discussion should focus on actionable items that the PAs can implement quickly. Peters acknowledged the critical need to improve moderate-income performance and suggested the PAs host a targeted discussion in March on near-term strategies, such as a quarterbacking model. McCarey asked if the Equity Working Group (EWG) should host the moderate-income-strategy discussion. Peters said the PAs can work with the EWG to plan the discussion. Bodemer agreed and suggested that Community First Partners participate in the EWG discussion.

Belliveau said that the PAs and implementers need to provide orientation on moderate-income program delivery. Belliveau said the C-Team can support the process for improving the performance of the moderate-income-program.

Johnson agreed with Bodemer that implementers should participate in deep-dive meetings. Johnson said that the moderate-income program has been a failure so the EEAC needs to understand the successes, challenges, and best practices in other jurisdictions. Johnson recommended that the Council provide feedback on the 2023 Priorities before the February EEAC Meeting. Johnson expressed concern about equity and the need to understand shortcomings and improve program design.

McCarey said the updated 2023 Priorities would be shared with Councilors. McCarey also said that the 2023 Priorities survey yielded helpful feedback and suggested the Council continue to use surveys to solicit Council feedback.

5. February EEAC Meeting – Finalize Agenda

McCarey stated that the February EEAC meeting would cover Council updates and business, a vote on the 2023 EEAC priorities, PA and C-Team presentations on active demand management programs, and a vote on Council representatives for the Equity Working Group.

6. March EEAC Meeting – Draft Agenda

McCarey announced that the March EEAC meeting agenda would include Council updates and business, a vote on the 2023 EEAC budget, review of the 2022 Q4 Report, discussion of Equity Targets, and updates on the small business program.

McCarey said that the PAs will lead a lunch-and-learn on Mass Save data in March, but also suggested they provide an update on energy specialist hiring.

Bodemer said that review of the Q4 Report should be streamlined and the PAs should coordinate presentation topics with deep dives. For example, the Q4 Report presentation should highlight

areas that coincide with proposed deep dive topics. McCarey replied that the Q4 Report presentation could be posted online while meeting discussion focuses on deep dive topics.

Johnson said that small businesses in Gloucester, a city with three prominent wind turbines, had efficient lighting installed and expressed interest in heat pumps and solar, but were oblivious to other Mass Save offerings. Johnson said that there is significant potential for small business energy-savings and asked that the PAs provide updates on efforts to promote the small business program.

7. Adjournment

McCarey, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:14 AM.

Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Draft 2023 EEAC Budget Spreadsheet
- Draft 2023 EEAC Priorities